FACT SHEET: 1985 JUDICIAL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

The 1985 Judicial Council Annual Report has been filed with the Governor and the Legislature. Part I contains the annual report of the Judicial Council, the chief administrative agency of the California court system. Part II contains the annual report of the Administrative Office of the Courts, the staff agency of the Judicial Council.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL REPORT -- PART I

State Funding of Trial Courts -- page 3

This chapter reports on the Trial Courts Funding Act of 1984, legislation that provided for state funding of trial courts with retention of local administrative control. The act was vetoed by the Governor.

Supreme Court Review of Court of Appeal Decisions -- page 9

Proposition 32, a measure that streamlines Supreme Court review procedures, is discussed in this chapter. Proposition 32 was passed by voters in the November 1984 general election and took effect on May 6, 1985.

Representation of Indigents in Criminal Appeals -- page 11

This report describes recent efforts to improve programs to provide effective assistance of counsel in criminal appellate proceedings.

Trial Court Management Rules -- page 17

New rules and standards governing civil and criminal trial court management in the superior courts were adopted by the Judicial Council effective January 1, 1985. These rules and standards are discussed in this chapter.

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Juror Excuse Standards -- page 19

This report reviews changes in the guidelines for granting excuses from jury service that were adopted by the Judicial Council effective January 1, 1985.

Sentencing Practices Annual Report -- page 21

The Uniform Determinate Sentencing Act of 1976 requires the Judicial Council to "continually study and review the statutory sentences and the operation of existing criminal penalties" and report its findings to the Governor and the Legislature. This seventh annual report focuses on the operation of the law and new sentencing developments.

Cameras in Court -- page 23

This chapter reviews the development of the rule permitting film and electronic media coverage of court proceedings in California.

Local Court Rules -- page 29

The Judicial Council has taken several actions, discussed in this chapter, to improve the usefulness and accessibility of local court rules.

Designation of Appellate Department Judges -- page 31

At the recommendation of the Judicial Council, the Legislature amended the law in 1984 to provide that the appellate department of any superior court may consist of four judges when the Chairperson of the Judicial Council finds it necessary. This chapter summarizes the reasons for the council's recommendation.

Family Law Filing Fees -- page 35

This chapter summarizes legislation recommended by the Judicial Council to exempt from the payment of a first paper response fee a stipulation regarding the date of termination

of marital status when the court has retained jurisdiction over the date of termination, and any documents relating to a stipulated postjudgment modification of child support. The legislation took effect July 1, 1984.

Age Increase Factor for Child Support Awards -- page 37

In compliance with state law, the Judicial Council adopted, effective July 1, 1984, an Age Increase Factor Table and Instructions to assist courts in fixing the amount of child support that would take into account the changing costs of raising a child. The development of the table and instructions are reviewed in this report.

Trial Court Costs and Revenue Estimates -- page 43

California trial court costs and revenues for fiscal year 1984-85 are estimated in this chapter, which includes a Court Financing Summary detailing the cost of state judicial operations.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REPORT -- PART II

Director's Report -- page 59

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) carries out the official actions and policies of the Judicial Council under the direction of the Administrative Director of the Courts. The AOC consists of various units that assist the council in surveying the work of the courts and improving the administration of justice. Each unit is described.

This chapter also reviews legislative action on various Judicial Council recommendations and other measures of interest to the courts. It summarizes amendments to the California Rules of Court and the 66 new and revised court forms adopted and approved by the council during 1984.

Also included are reports on the following:

-- A total of 89 petitions for coordination of actions sharing common questions of fact or law were received during 1984. There were 321 separate actions involved in these petitions.

-- The AOC provided administrative assistance to the trial courts in 27 criminal cases in which a change of venue motion was granted in 1984.

-- Consolidation of municipal and justice court districts and requirements for justice court oral examinations are detailed in separate reports.

Analysis of Judicial Statistics -- page 93

Chapter 2 of the Administrative Office Report analyzes the workload of the California courts during fiscal year 1983-84.

The Supreme Court set a new record by transacting a total of 10,420 matters. The court recorded 4,025 filings; issued 126 written opinions; and disposed of 3,321 petitions for hearing, 618 original proceedings, 70 executive clemency applications, and numerous motions, petitions for rehearing and other matters.

The Courts of Appeal set a new record in fiscal year 1983-84, with 15,956 filings of contested matters, a 1 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. The Courts of Appeal disposed of 8,509 contested matters on the merits by written opinion, leaving 10,015 appeals pending on June 30, 1984, an increase of 1 percent over the number pending a year earlier.

The 781,500 filings in the superior courts set a new record high during fiscal year 1983-84. These filings were about 4 percent higher than the previous peak reached in 1982-83. The superior courts disposed of about 616,200 cases, exclusive of civil matters dismissed for lack of prosecution. This represents an increase of 3 percent over the previous year.

Statistical data for the municipal and justice courts were summarized together since both courts have the same jurisdiction. There were 17.6 million filings for the 169 lower courts in fiscal 1983-84, a slight increase from the previous year. These filings included 8.7 million parking cases. The lower courts disposed of 15.6 million cases, 2 percent less than the year before.

During the fiscal year, 18,113 total days of assistance were given to the courts by active and retired judges serving under assignments made by the Chief Justice as Chairperson of the Judicial Council. Substantial assistance also was rendered by commissioners, referees, and temporary judges.

Appendix Tables -- page 171

The AOC annual report includes more than 90 pages of appendix tables with statistics on the work of California courts, including the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal, and the superior, municipal and justice courts.

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